THE JEVV OUTWARD: BEING A GLASSE FOR THE Professors of this Age:

Wherein, if they read with meekneſs, and in the true light, ſuch of them as have not overſlipt the day of their viſitation, may ſee their own ſpirits, to their own everlaſting advantage and comfort, by learning ſubjection to that, which hath power in it to deſtroy this evil ſpirit in them.

CONTAINING

Some EXCEPTIONS and ARGUMENTS of the *Jews*, againſt Chriſts Appearance in that fleſhly form of his in their dayes, which the preſent Profeſſors may view, and compare with their Exceptions and Arguments againſt his Appearance in Spirit in this Age, that they may ſee and conſider which of them are the more, and the more weighty.

By *Iſaac Penington*, the Younger.

LONDON, Printed by *G. D.* for *Lodowick Lloyd*, and are to be ſold at the Sign of the *Caſtle* in *Cornhill*, 1659.

THE Lord God of infinite goodneſs, who hath ever dearly loved Mankind, yet could never ſo appear to them ſince the tranſgreſſion, as to be owned by them, till the vail was taken from before their hearts. Iſrael in Egypt hearkened not to Moſes, becauſe of their anguiſh and bondage. When they were led out, they were ever and anon murmuring, and picking quarrels againſt him. Samuel they rejected (as the Lord laies to their charge) though they might excuſe themſelves, and ſay they had juſt exceptions againſt his ſons. Elijah, that mighty man of God, the great reſtorer of Iſrael, and pleader againſt Baal by fire, his life was ſought for. And though there be not a particular record of their uſage of the Prophets about thoſe dayes, yet in general he complains that they were all ſlain but himſelf, 1 King. 19. 10. Micaiah was ſmote on the cheek, and jeered by the falſe Prophet which ſmote him, and ſaid, which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to ſpeak unto thee? And he was commanded to be put in priſon, and fed with bread of affliction, and water of affliction. Jeremiah was put in the dungeon, even to the danger of his life: and by thoſe few that were left, that ſeemed ſingly to enquire by him concerning the will of the Lord, (Jer. 42. 2, 3.) diſdainfully rejected, chap. 43. 2. What ſhould I ſpend time in particular inſtances? What Prophet can I except? for though all their bad dealings with them, are not related in Scripture, yet Chriſt teſtifies that they did deal badly with them all, ſome of them they ſtoned, ſome of them they ſcourged in their Synagogues, ſome of them they killed and crucified, and others they perſecuted from City to City. Yea, ſaith Stephen, which of the Prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of the Juſt one. Ye make it ſuch a ſtrange thing, that if Chriſt had been a Prophet, ye ſhould not own him: why which of the Prophets was owned? ye have ſtill ſome exception or other againſt us, that we are not the Prophets of God; and againſt our meſſage, that it is not the mind of God. Ye take arguments from one Prophets words, to oppoſe another Prophet with; and from one Prophets manner of coming, to oppoſe another Prophets manner of coming. If John come neither eating nor drinking, ye reject him for his auſtereneſs: if Chriſt come both eating and drinking, ye reject him for his liberty and freedome in the life. Now what is the reaſon of this? Chriſt himſelf gives the reaſon, Mat. 11. 19. Wiſdome is juſtified of her children. Ye are not the children of wiſdom,

ye are not begotten of the life, of the ſpirit of the Prophets, and ſo cannot juſtifie that ſpirit. Ye have got the Letter of the Prophets, ye are born of that; but ye are not born of the life, ye are not born of the wiſdome. And ſo, whoever comes forth in the ſame birth from the Letter with you, him ye can own: but if any Prophet come forth with that ſame ſpirit, him ye cannot own. He that is born after the fleſh, cannot but perſecute him that is born after the ſpirit. Jeruſalem was all along the perſecuter of the Prophets, from the beginning to the end.

And is this nothing to you, O ye Profeſſors of this age? Search and ſee who have been the perſecuters among you, but they who have had the name of the Church and her Prophets? Who hath ſlain the Witneſſes? The Church of Rome *hath ſlain the Witneſſes againſt her, and the* Proteſtants *have ſlain the Witneſſes againſt them. About the beginning of theſe troubles, if a man were never ſo truly zealous, yet if he could not conform to the Common-prayer-book and Ceremonies, how was he perſecuted? A Non-conformiſt, a Separatiſt, a Browniſt, an Anabaptiſt (though owning the ſame Chriſt in his very heart and ſoul) yet becauſe his practiſe was a teſtimony againſt the falſe Church-worſhip of the common* Proteſtant, *muſt be hunted up and down to Courts, impriſoned, fined, baniſhed. And to this day, the Lord can bring forth no birth of his Spirit, but the zealous Profeſſor hates, reviles, and ſeeks to deſtroy. If the Lord lay any Law upon the Conſcience, if it be not ſuitable to their apprehenſions from the Letter, how do they reproach, diſdain, revile, and endeavour to render ſuch odious to the Magiſtrates, and to the People!*

But why ſhould we wonder at theſe things? There is no new thing under the Sun. The ſtate of the world is juſt as it alwaies was. The power of Truth in every age, hath been ſtill oppoſed by thoſe who cryed up the Form. It were a wonder if it ſhould be otherwiſe. I ſhould much more wonder, if the Teachers and Profeſſors of this age ſhould own Truth, than that they fight againſt it and perſecute it. Well friends and brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and faithful to his Truth in the power of his might; bear the reproach, the afflictions of this age, the perſecutions of this your day: Verily your eyes ſhall ſee that there is a reward for the righteous, and your hearts ſhall be ſatisfied with it, when the children of the Kingdome (of this age, as well as of Chriſts, and all former ages) ſhall be ſhut out in utter darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

Some

Some Exceptions and Arguments of the *Jews*, againſt Chriſt's Appearance, &c.

THE Jews were once the only outward viſible People of God, who were choſen by God for a peculiar People, who had the Promiſe of, and expected the *Meſſiah*, whoſe faith and hope of Salvation was in him, yea, and at that very time they were looking for him; yet when he came, he was *a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence* to them, and they could by no means receive him. They were full of reaſonings, and doubts, and contendings about it, but could never with all their wiſdom from the Letter, determine that that was he. Though he lived as never man lived, though he ſpake as never man ſpake, though he did what never man did; yet ſtill ſome exception or other they had from the Letter of the Scriptures, to which his manner of appearance, his converſation, and his Doctrine did not ſuit in their judgment; and ſo after many Diſputes and Debates, they at length deliver him up to death, as a Blaſphemer, a deceiver, a ſeducer of the People.

Many Exceptions and Arguments they had againſt him, againſt his *Deſcent*, his *Doctrine*, his *Practiſes*, his *Miracles*, his *Followers*, &c. which I ſhall refer to Heads, to make them more obvious.

1. They excepted *at his deſcent and kindred. Is not this the Carpenters Son? Is not his Mother called Mary? and his Brethren*, James, *and* Joſes, *and* Simon, *and* Judas? *And his Siſters are they not all with us?* Matt. 13. 55, 56. (What this the glorious *Meſſiah*, the great King of Glory, of whom all the Prophets have propheſied and ſpoke ſuch great things! ſurely it can-

not be.) *And they were offended in him*, vers. 57. It was this made them they could not receive that heavenly Doctrine of his, which otherwise might have been life to them, when he taught them that he was *the bread of Life that came down from heaven*: but they murmured because of it, and said, *Is not this Jesus the son of* Joseph, *whose Father and Mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven*, John 6. 41, 42. So again, John 7.27. *We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.* This was a close Argument, and was raised up to eat out a deep impression of his being the Christ, as may appear from the foregoing verse. He speaketh indeed boldly, and deep things, &c. as if he were the Christ; but how can he be he, seeing it is known from whence he comes?

2. At his Country, or place of his Education and residence, which was *Nazareth of Galilee. Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John 1. 46. *Shall Christ come out of Galilee?* John 7.41. *Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet*, verse 52.

3. *At the time and season of his Coming.* He came (as to their sense) before *Elias*. With this Argument they pinched the Disciples, as is signified in that Query of theirs to Christ, *Why then say the Scribes that* Elias *must first come?* Matt. 17.10 This could not but be a sore Argument in the mouth of the Scribes, who might reason with the Disciples on this wise: What poor, ignoraut, sottish, deluded People are you, to own this man for your Master, and take him for the Messiah? *Elias* must first come, and restore all things. If this man preached never so heavenly Doctrine, and did never so many Miracles, yet if he pretend to be the *Messiah*, he can be but a Deceiver; for the true *Messiah* comes not before *Elias*; and every one knows that *Elias* is not yet come, nor his work of restoring all things, so much as begun.

4. His *Doctrine* administred abundance of offence to them, and they were continually stumbling at it. That heavenly doctrine mentioned a little before, that he was *the bread of life*, they murmured at it, *John* 6. 41. When he did but say, *God was his father*, they presently flew out upon him, and said he *made himself equal with God*, *John* 5. 18. When he said, *Destroy this Temple, and in three dayes I will raise it up*; they misunderstood him, and brought it forth as an argument against him at

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the time of his suffering, *Mat.* 26. 61. And cast it as a jear in his teeth, *Mat.* 27. 40. When he did but say to the man sick of the palsie, *Son thy sins are forgiven thee*; the Scribes and Pharisees presently exclaimed against him, *who is this which speaketh blasphemies? who can forgive sins, but God alone? Luke* 5. 21. and chap. 7. 49. When he preached very powerfully against *covetousness*, the Pharisees *derided him*, *Luke* 16. 14. Yea, when he did but preach a Parable or two about *the Widdow of Sarepta, and Naaman the Syrian* (it coming a little close to their State) *all they in the Synagogue were so filled with wrath, that they rose up and thrust him out of the City, and led him unto the brow of the hill to cast him down headlong*, *Luke* 4. 28, 29. At his saying that *Abraham rejoyced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad*; the Jews replyed, *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? John* 8. 57. How absurd and impossible was this to them, that a man of not fifty years, should say that Abraham (who lived so many ages before) saw his day; And instead of giving them an argument to demonstrate it to them, he only returns them a more confident affirmation, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am*; *vers.* 58. which so enraged them, that they took up stones to cast at him, *vers.* 59. Now mark, the life speaks what it sees and knows, and so it gives forth its Testimony: the wise professor not being in the life, he cannot know or receive the testimony, but calls for arguments and damonstrations to his wise eye, the life refuseth to answer him, but instead thereof, only affirmeth the thing more strongly & confidently; this (being so far from that which he looks for and requires to satisfie him) kindles disdain and rage in him: and he looks upon the life, for this way of proceeding, as worthy to be stoned. What, when they should lay before Christ a fair argument, whereby they might plainly convince him by evident reason, that he could not see *Abrahams* day; and he instead of answering it, should only bring forth a more confident affirmation. Would not mens wisdome in this age, even hiss at such a thing? yet this was the way of the life then, in that day; and the life may at his pleasure, take the same way again now, to offend the wise and knowing.

When he spake of his being *the good Shepheard*, and of his *laying down his life for the Sheep* (and of the Hirelings fleeing in time of danger to save himself) *John* 10, *vers.* 11. 12. &c. ma-

ny of the Jews said, *he hath a Devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?* vers. 20. Many of them that were then the people of God (the separated people: for the Jews were a people seperated from the World, and studied the Law, and observed the Ordinances of *Moses*) looked upon Christ, as a man not fit to be heard speak, but as a mad man, as one that had a Devil, as one that might have great power of deceit from the Devil, to bewitch men from truth; *why hear ye him?* what good can ye expect from him? *He hath a Devil, and is mad.* O how desperately will bold flesh venture to judge of the life and power of God, when it hath got a little knowledge from the Scriptures, and a way of worship, duties, and ordinances!

When he said, *I and my Father are one, John* 10. 30. *they took up stones again to stone him,* vers. 31. and made no question but they did well in doing of it, as appears by their answer to his demand; for which of his good works they stoned him? They reply very confidently, *for a good work we stone thee not, but for Blasphemy, and because thou being a man, makest thy self God,* vers. 32, 33. And when he said, *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death, John* 8. 51. Then said the Jews unto him, *now we know that thou hast a Devil. Abraham is dead, and the Prophets are dead, who makest thou thy self?* vers. 53. Were not *Abraham* and the Prophets holy men? had not they the sayings of God? and did not they keep the sayings of God? yet they are dead. Such a kind of speech as this must needs be from the Devil. Now thou makest manifest from what Spirit thou speakest, *Now know we that thou hast a Devil.* And indeed how could the professors of that age digest such things, being so contrary to what appeared to them, to be certain truth in the Scriptures.

And there were many other things as hard to them, though the exceptions which might or did arise in their minds, are not particularly mentioned: as when he saith, *I am the door of the Sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers, but the Sheep did not hear them, John* 10. 7, 8. How offensive must this Doctrine needs have been to them, going carnally to understand and reason about it? What were all the Prophets and holy men before thee, thieves and robbers? did the truth never come, till thou brought'st it? What became of our Fore-fathers in former ages? were they none of them Gods Sheep? did none of them find

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the door? for thou saist thou art *the door*, and thou hast been but of late. And whereas thou saist, the Sheep did not hear them, that's utterly false: for they did hear *Moses*, and they did hear the *Prophets*: and we have their writings, and will keep to them for all thee, let who will be thy Sheep. When he said, that he *came not to send peace but division*, *Mat.* 10. 25. How readily might they reply, that his own mouth discovered him, not to be the *Messiah*, the Saviour, the peace-maker, but the worker of divisions, the causer of breaches in families, setting three against two, and two against three, *Luke* 21. 51. When he said, *whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*, *John* 8. 34. Might not they well except against this, as condemning the whole generation of the righteous, and making null the way of sacrifices which God had appointed for sins committed at any time by his people, which could not but presuppose their commission of sin? did not *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *David*, *Moses*, & the rest of the Prophets all commit sin, and were they servants of sin? He taught also, that *the children of the Kingdom should be cast into utter darkness*, *Mat.* 8. 12. Oh how harsh would this sound in the ears of the zealous professing Jew, who was waiting and hoping for the Kingdome! So in his Doctrine there seemed many contradictions to the fleshly understanding, for one while he said, *I judge no man*, for I came not to condemn the World: and yet was he not continually judging and condemning the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Priests, the Lawyers, and that whole generation of professors? So again he came to seek and save that which was lost, to preach the Gospel of peace: and yet another while he saith, he came not to send peace but a sword, and to kindle a fire, and to set men at variance, &c. Again, one while he said, *I and my Father are one*, another time, *my Father is greater than I*; one while he bid men do as the Scribes and Pharisees, taught; another while he bid men beware of the Leaven, or Doctrine of the Prarisees and Saduces, *Mat.* 16. 12.

But to what purpose should I heap up any more instances? O thou that readest this, wait to know in thy self the ear that cannot hear Christs Doctrin, and while thon condemnest the Jews, do not run into the same error of unbelief and gain-saying, but wait to know the voice of Christ in this day, and to receive the ear that can hear it, for though thou shouldest be willing to hear, yet thou canst not, till thy ear be opened. *Nicodemus* who

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could acknowledge Christ *a teacher come from God*, yet could not receive the doctrine of the new birth from him, *John* 3.4. and there were many things the disciples themselves were not able to bear, for when, at a certain time, he spake of *giving his flesh to eat*, not only the Jews, *John* 6.52. but they also stumbled, *ver.*61. and who is there among professors, that can now bear it, or receive Christs own interpretation of it? who saith, that *the flesh* (which they understood) *profiteth nothing*, but the flesh which he meant was *spirit and life*, ver.63.

5. *At his practises, and conversation, How is it that he eateth and drinketh, with Publicans and sinners*, Mark 2.16. *Behold a glutenous man, and a wine bibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners*, Luke 7.14. *This man if he were a Prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner*, Luke 7.39. At the Publicans and sinners drawing nigh to hear him, the Pharisees and Scribes were offended, and murmured saying, *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*, Luke 15.1,2. and when he went to *Zacheus* house, *they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be Guest with a man that is a sinner*, Luke 19.7.

Again, because he healed on the Sabbath, and justified his disciples in plucking of ears of corn on the Sabbath, *they were filled with madness, and communed what they might do to him*, Luke 6. *ver.* 3. *and ver.* 10, 11. *and took counsell how they might destroy him*, Mark 3.5,6. Another time, the Ruler of the Synagogue spake with indignation about it, *Luke* 13.14. Yea, *the Jews did persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him because he had healed a man, and bid him take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath day*, John 5. *ver.* 8, 16. and some of them made it a strong argument against him, *this man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day*, John 9.16. What come from God, and be a breaker of his Ordinances? Can these two stand together? Read and consider, what more strict Ordinance of God under the Law, than the Sabbath? What one Ordinance more conducing to the honour and worship of God? Did not their whole religion and worship much depend upon it? How could this possibly but be a great offence to them in that Spirit, and Litteral Wisdome from the Scriptures, wherein they stood? Yet Christ, in his fleshly appearance, was Lord of the Sabbath; and in his spiritual appearance he doth not lose his dominion.

Again

Again they excepted against him, that he did not teach his disciples to fast and pray as *John* did, Luke 5.33. but could suffer them to transgress the traditions of the Elders, Mat. 15.2. he was not strict after the *Jewish* way of devotion, not strict after *Johns* way neither; but against the traditions of the godly Elders of the *Jewish* Church, against sanctifying of the Lords Sabbath (justifying his disciples in plucking ears of corn thereon, whereas their fore-fathers the Jews, were not so much as to gather Manna on that day) against fasting and prayer, for he justified his disciples in that they did not fast and pray as *John* did, saying, how could they while the bride-groom was with them? Mat. 9. 15. and consider which way the Jews (in the state they stood) could understand such an answer as this, to rest satisfied therewith?

6. They excepted *against his Miracles*, partly because he did them on the Sabbath day, *John* 9.16. whereupon they concluded he could not be of God (for if he had been of God, he would have observed the day which God commanded) & if he wrought them not by the power of God, by whose power then must he work them? So they concluded, *He casteth out Devils, through the Prince of Devils*, Mat. 9. 34. *he hath Belzebub*, and *by the Prince of Devils casteth he out Devils*, Mark. 3.32. and having thus concluded in themselves, there was no ear open in them, to hear any thing that might be said to the contrary. And again partly, because he did not answer their wils, in giving them such a sign as they required; for this was still their tone, *Master, we would see a sign from thee*, Mat. 12.38. *what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou dost these things?* John 2.18. and they more particularly express what sign they would have, they would have *a sign from heaven*, Luke 11. 18. *What sign shewest thou, that we may see and beleeve thee?* John 6. 30. We are ready to be convinced, we are ready to beleeve, If thou would give us sufficient ground of beleiving in thee. As for all thy healing people, and casting out Devils, Belzebub (the Prince of Devils) may furnish thee with power) therewith, to deceive and bewitch us from the Law and Ordinances of *Moses* (which we are sure are of God) but shew us a sign from heaven, or else blame us not for not leaving *Moses* to run after thee.

7. They excepted *at the Testimony, which the Spirit of God in him, gave concerning him.* When he spake the inward Testimony, which the spirit of God gave from within, saying, *I am*

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the light of the world, he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, John 8. 13. they presently cried out *thou beareſt record of thy ſelf, thy record is not true*, verſe 14. mark his anſwer, *It is written in your law, that the Teſtimony of two men is true, I am one that bear witneſs of my ſelf, and the Father that ſent me beareth witneſs of me*, verſe 17. 18. How would ſuch an anſwer paſs now in theſe dayes, though the ſame life ſhould ſpeak it? would not the wiſe profeſſors of this age even hoot at it? yet the thing is known at this day, even the life which the Father begets, and the Fathers teſtifying of it, and with it: and thou that readeſt this, mighteſt know it, couldeſt thou wait in the loſs of thine own life, (wiſdome, and knowledg) for it.

8. They excepted *againſt his diſciples and followers*, which were women, Publicans and ſinners, the common people, yea the meaneſt, the pooreſt, and moſt Ignorant (in their account) who were fitteſt to be deluded and led away. *Are ye alſo deceived? Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees beleeved on him? but this people who knoweth not the law, are curſed*, John 7. 47, 48, 49. the common people, the ignorant people, the unſetled people, ſuch as know not the law, ſuch as underſtand not the Scriptures, they run after him, and cry him up: but which of the Setled ones, which of the truly Zealous ones, which of the Wiſe men in the knowledge of the Law and Prophets, which of the orthodox Scribes and Phariſees, who keep cloſe to *Moſes*, which of theſe beleeve in him? whom of them can he deceive? As for the heady people, who (for want of knowledge of the Scriptures) are ready to run after every new fangle, they are not worth the minding, they are *accurſed*, and therefore no marvel though God give them up to follow this deceiver, & to cry up his new Light, and forſake the good old Light of *Moſes* & the Prophets.

9. They excepted againſt him, that he did not rebuke his diſciples, and the multitude (ſpreading their garments, cutting down branches from the trees and ſtrowing them in the way) with the children that cried *Hoſanna* to him, as he rode on the Aſſe Colt to *Jeruſalem*: but he rather juſtified them, *Luke* 19. 31. and *Mat* 21. 15, 16. what a ridiculous, and vainglorious peice of pageantry would this ſeem to the fleſhly wiſe eye?

10. That he did not ſhew ſufficient authority for what he did.

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By what authority dost thou these things? and who gave thee this authority, &c. Mark 11.28. Thou takest upon thee great authority over the people of God, over their Teachers, yea over Gods Temple, Sabbath, and Ordinances; but, wheres thy authority so to do? Shew us that, &c.

11. They excepted when he spoke of his sufferings and death, *We have heard in our Law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how saist thou, the Son of Man must be lift up? Who is the son of man?* John 12.34. Sure he that is to be lift up, cannot be the Christ which is to abide for ever, and not to die: So that here (in one breath) thou hast overthrown all that thou hast been setting up by thy Preaching and Miracles. Now which way could they understand this thing? Nay the very Disciples themselves could not swallow it, but were startled at it, and Christ was fain to hide it a long time from them. And yet if there be any thing held forth now in these dayes by the same spirit, (as concerning light and perfection, or other truths which are seen in the spirit) because men cannot apprehend them with their carnal understanding, and make them agree with their carnal knowledge of the Scriptures, what liberty do they take to themselves to speak both against the truth it self, and also against them who have seen these things in the spirit, and speak them from the spirit? Now whosoever becomes a Disciple, must wait in the obedience to know the doctrine, and not think to enter with that wisdome, and carnal reasoning from Scriptures, which the Scribes and Pharisees, and Professors of that age were shut out with.

There were many other things which they could not but except against, as at his answers to their questions, to which sometimes he was silent and gave no answer at all. At other times, he answered not directly, but in Parables (and how offensive is this to mans wisdome, who requires a positive and direct answer?) And sometimes his answers might seem quite from the thing, as *John* 12.34,35.

His not giving respect to persons (for it was a known thing of him, that he regarded not mens persons, *Mat.* 22.16.) could not be very pleasing to them, who loved greetings, and sought honor one of another. He shewed not respect to *Herod* the King, (but spake contemptuously of him, as men would account it) *Go saith he, and tell that Fox.* He did not shew respect to the reverend and grave Doctors of the Law, nay nor to the High Priest himself.

self. Nay he did not shew respect to his own Disciples, but said to *Peter*, (when he mildly and affectionately desired his death might be avoided) *Get thee behind me Satan.* How harsh and rough a reply might this seem? If *Peter* had erred, through his affection and tenderness to his Master, a meek spirit would gently have informed him; but to call him Devil, and say, get thee behind me; what kind of spirit doth this savour of, would that professing Jew say, who knoweth not the true meekness, but seeks after a fleshly meekness, which is a servant to the fleshly wisdome and prudence, but not true born? Nay he did not speak respectively to his own Mother, (as mans spirit, by its rule of respect would judge and condemn him) but said, Woman, what have I to do with thee? *John* 2. 4. and in a manner denied all his relations, *Mat.* 12. 48.

Lastly, (to instance no more) at his harsh censures of all the Professors of that age, (which observed the Law of *Moses*, and *Israels* Statutes) with all their laborious and godly Teachers, justifying none but himself, and what he taught, and a few of his followers. He told them that they had not the *love of God in them*, John 5. 42. Did not this (think ye) seem to them a very harsh charge? And why not the love of God? because they did not follow him, and his new Doctrine? yea, would they be ready to say, they did love God, and kept his Commandements, Sabbaths, and Ordinances, which he transgressed.

He laid this also to their charge, that they did not believe *Moses*, John 5. 46. What an unjust charge might this seem, when they were so zealous for *Moses*, and their very dislike of him, and controversie against him, was for the sake of the Law and Ordinances of *Moses*?

Another charge he laid to them was, that they were not the children of *Abraham*, or of God, but of the Devil, *John* 8. ver. 39. 42. 44. What a rash censorious man might they account him thus to speak of them, who were the human seed of *Abraham*, who were such strict observers of Gods Laws and Ordinances, (which is the property of his children) and such enemies to the Devil, that they would not be drawn from the truths, and way of worship taught by *Moses* and the Prophets, no not by all the Miracles he could work?

He called them *a faithless and perverse Generation*, Mat. 17. 17.

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He told them that they did not *know God*, though they said with confidence that he was their God; John 12.54,55. How could they bear this? They had been studying the law and Prophets, and had a great stock of knowledge from thence, and were strict and exact in worship (some of them, as well as *Paul*, might be *according to the Law blameless*) and now to be told they did not know God? Nay, he that aboundeth in knowledge, devotion, and worship, yet being not in the life and pure Power of the Spirit, hath not one dram of the true knowledge.

He told them that they should *dye in their sins*, John 8.21. (O hard word, and severe judgement!) And yet he had told them a little before that he judged no man, *ver.* 15. yea they did think themselves exceedingly wronged by him, and thought that no man that had any thing of God in him could speak such things, but only one that was an enemy to the people of God, and led by the spirit of Satan. To this effect they expresse themselves, *verse* 48. of that *Chap. Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hath a Devil?*

Yea when Christ charged them with *going about to kill him*, they seemed to themselves so clear in their own consciences, that they answered, *thou hast a Devil, who goes about to kill thee?* John 7.29. how easily might they close up the controversie, and by this very thing conclude him to be a false Prophet? He sayes we went about to kill him, when (God knows) there was not such a thing in our hearts. Can this man be a true Prophet? yet Christ knew the professing Jews to be the Murtherer, and in and for his Religion sake still seeking to slay him. And there is no such murtherer of Christ (the life) upon the earth, as the zealous Professor and worshipper out of the life. He that is in the life cannot persecute any man; he that is out of the life, cannot but persecute him that is in the life. Hereby the true and false christian may be discerned, by the weakest simple and single eye.

And then for their teachers and expounders of the law, how exceeding bitter did he seem against them? and how heavy things was he continually laying to their charge? He called them *blind Guids*, *Hypocrites*, *painted Sepulchres*, *Graves which appear not*, and prononuced woe upon woe against them. Read that one place, Mat. 23. 33. *Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?* What

speak thus of our zealous Teachers, who study the Law, are strict in practising of the Ordinances, and take such pains to instruct us in the mind of God, from *Moses* and the Prophets? was such a man as this fit to live? Nay and he does not shew a Gospel spirit, mark how sharp and bitter his words came from him (for indeed a sharper speech, with greater vehemency and indignation of spirit, can hardly be spoken) and they might seem to aggravate this sharp condemnation of his, from his own confession: he himself had confessed that they sate in *Moses* chair (now he might have shewn some honour to *Moses* chair, and to their office, which was of God, and doubtless good) and not have gone about to make them thus odious in the eyes of the people. Nay he himself had bid men do as they said, but in *ver.* 3. of that Chap. Now was it likely that ever men should mind what they said, or observe their doctrine, when he had thus represented them, *as oppressors of the conscience*, ver. 4. *as devourers of widdows houses, and making long prayers in Hypocrisie*, ver. 15. *as making their proselytes more the children of hell then themselves*, ver. 15. *as neglecters of the weightier matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy and Faith*, ver. 23. *as appearing righteous to men, but full of Hypocrisie and iniquity*, ver. 28. *as of the same generation that killed the Prophets*, ver. 31. 32. *as deceivers, as such as led into the ditch, (and bid men beware of their leaven)* were not these good kind of incouragements for People to hear them? Yea he charged them with *shutting up the Kingdome of heaven against men, and not going in themselves, nor suffering men to enter that were going in*, ver. 13. How could they observe what they taught without hearing them? and would Christ wish any to hear such men as these? Yet for all this, without doubt they were not without their justifications against Christ in these respects, and also had their charges (on the other hand) ready against him. Now how did they shut up the Kingdome of Heaven against men? Did not they teach the Law, and direct men to the Ordinances of God, and open the Prophets words to them? was this shutting up the Kindome of heaven? And would not they suffer men to enter? Why, their work was to win people to their profession, they would compass Sea and Land to make a proselyte. How stifly might the Jews have pleaded against Christ, that he did slander their godly Ministers, who were very painful and zealous in opening the Scriptures,

tures, and teaching the way of God? nay he himself could not deny but they taught well: for he himself saith, *whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, Mat.* 23. 3. But mark now, that ye may understand the thing, it is thus. Any teaching, or expounding of Scriptures out of the life, shuts up the Kingdome: for the Life is the Kingdome: and words from the life yeild the savour of the Kingdome: but words out of it (though never so good and true) reach not to the life in another, but only build up a knowledge in the contrary wisdome, and teach to hold the truth in the unrighteousness, where Satans Kingdome stands, and where he hath the dominion over all that is brought thither. And so this kind of teaching and knowledg shuts up the door and way of life; and must be lost, before the Kingdome can be found.

They shut up the true Kingdome, but they opened another Kingdome, they opened the Kingdome another way, (which was in truth shutting of it,) and they had Disciples and Children of the Kingdome whom they tickled with the hope of life, and fed with promises and comforts: but these the Lord would shut out. *Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdome of Heaven: but the Children of the Kingdome, shall be cast out into utter darkness, Mat.* 8. 11, 12. This is as true at this day, in this present dispensation, as it was then in that dispensation, though men make it a great accusation against us, charging us that we say none are the people of God but our selves, and as if all were damned but we. These are mens harsh and unsavory expressions; we use not to speak after this manner, but soberly open the state of the thing, as it stands in the truth (and as it hath been revealed unto us, by him who is true, and cannot lie,) which is thus:

That through which men are saved, is the dispensation of truth in their age. The measure of light, which God gives forth in every age; that is the means and proper way of Salvation in that age: and what ever men get, or profess of the knowledg of truth, declared in former ages, yet making use of that to withstand the present dispensation of truth in their age, they cannot thereby be saved, but may thereby be hardened against that which should save them. And this we are assured of from the Lord, that as the Jews could not be saved by the Law of *Moses* (making use of it in opposition to the shining of the light of God in the Pro-

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phets in their present ages) nor afterwards could be saved by magnifying and observing both the words of *Moses* and the Prophets, and their belief from thence of a *Messiah* to come, (making use of these things to oppose that appearance of Christ in the flesh, which was the dispensation of their day then.) No more can any Professors be saved now, by belief of a Christ come, or any thing which they can learn or practise from the Scriptures, making use thereof to oppose the dispensation of this day; which dispensation is the immediate and powerful breaking forth of the light of the Spirit, in the hearts of Gods people (who have earnestly fought, and in much sorrow and perplexity of Spirit, longed and waited for him) after this long dark night of the Antichristian apostacy.

There remain yet some other exceptions against him, about the time of his suffering death, with his hard usage, which would not wholly be passed over.

As first, his disrespective or irreverend answering of the high Priest, (as it seemed to them) when he asked him of his Doctrine, *John* 18. *vers.* 19. His answer was, that *he spake openly in the World, not in secret, why askest thou me? ask them that heard me*; whereupon one of the Officers struck him, saying; *Answerest thou the high Priest so?* vers. 22. The plainness and simplicity of the life (which bows to God, and cannot regard man in the transgression) seems rude and unmannerly to the lofty Spirit of the world.

2. His silence at the Testimonies brought against him, and to the high Priest when he questioned him, *Mark* 14. 60, 61. Indeed either the speaking or silence in the life, is offensive to the carnal professor, who knoweth not the Law of the life in this particular, but can either speak or be silent according to his own will. This is the difference between the true and the false Christian; The false Christian, his knowledg and Religion stands in his own will, in his own understanding, (he speaks in his own time) both which are crucified in him that is born of the Spirit.

3. When he did speak the truth of himself, the high Priest *rent his cloaths*, and charged him with blasphemy, *Mat.* 26.64. And those that were by, fell in with the high Priest, and said he was *guilty of death*, vers. 66. Then they *spat on his face and buffeted him, and smote him, and mocked him, and blindfolded him,*

him, and struck him on the face, bidding him prophesie, who smote him, Mat. 26. 67, 68. and *Luke* 22. 63, 64.

When they brought him to *Pilate*, they would have *Pilate* take it for granted that he was an evil doer, and worthy of death, for when *Pilate* asked for their accusation against him, they answer, *if he were not a Malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee*, *John* 18. 29, 30. *Pilate* refusing so to proceed in judgment, (*vers.* 31.) they begin to bring in their charges, *we found this fellow perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King*, *Luke* 23. 2. *Pilate* examines him herein, but professes he can find no fault in him at all, *John* 18. 38. Then the chief Priests accused him of many other things, (*Mark* 15. 3. and were more fierce, saying, *he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jury, beginning from Galilee to this place.* (This indeed was his great offence, he taught with the authority of the Spirit, and not as the Scribes.) Then *Pilate* sent him to *Herod* (where the chief Priests and Scribes stood vehemently accusing him) who questioned him much, but he answered him nothing. And *Herod, with his men of War, set him at naught, and mocked him, and arayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate*, *Luke* 23. 9, 10, 11. *Pilate* professed that he could not find him guilty of this second charge neither of perverting the people, *vers.* 14. therefore chastising him, he would release him, *vers.* 16. But the people (by the perswasion of the chief Priests and Elders) cried all at once, *Away with this man, and release unto us Barnabas*, vers. 18. but let him be crucified, *crucifie him, crucifie him*, vers. 21. &c. Now when *Pilate* had scourged him, and the Souldiers had stripped him, and put on him a Scarlet Robe, and had put a Crown of platted Thornes on his head, and a Reed in his right hand, and had bowed the knee to him in *Mockery*, and spit on him, and smote him with a Reed, he brings him forth to them again, hoping this might appease there malice, and they might be content to spare his being crucified. They tell him they have a Law, and by their Law he ought to dye, because he made himself the Son of God, *John* 19. vers. 4. to 8. (see how they turn and wind every way to make the innocent an offender, and to make some Law, of one kind or other, take hold of him!) But when all their accusations would not prevail with *Pilate*, but still (from the sense of his innocency)

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he had a mind to release him, they use another subtile artifice, telling him, *if he let this man go, he was not Cæsars friend*, John 19. 12. This carries it with *Pilate*, now he disputes no further, but delivers him up to their will, *Luke* 23. 5.

Now thou, who readest this, take heed of judging the Jews for all this wickedness, while the same nature is alive in thee, which did all this in them: for assuredly thou (in whom that nature, which did it in them, is not subdued) wouldst have done the same thing, hadst thou lived in those dayes. Thou that disdainest and persecutest the appearance of Christ in this age, whuldst have disdained, & have persecuted his appearance in that age, do not deceive thy Soul.

The Jews did as little think, that ever they should have put a Prophet, or any good man to death (much less the *Messiah*) as thou canst: yea, they could blame their Fathers for killing the Prophets, and say, if they had lived in those dayes, they would not have done it: and yet dost thou not read what they did? The persecuting Spirit was ever blind, and could in no age read its evil and bitter nature, and its enmity against the life and power. Be not thou blind in thy day (as they were in theirs) and an enemy under pretence of being a friend.

4. Another exception or argument against him about the time of his suffering death, was, that he did not put forth his power to save himself from the cross, *he saved others, let him save himself*, if he be Christ the chosen of God, *Luke* 23. 35. Is it likely that this is the Son of God, and that he did so many miracles by the power of God, and cannot now save himself from the cross? This his suffering death on the Cross did a little stumble some of the Disciples (as may appear, *Luke* 24. 20, 21.) and was enough to have overturned the faith (of any) which stood not in the Spirit, and in the power. The Souldiers also could mock and manage this argument against him, saying, *If thou be the King of the Jews, save thy self*, *Luke* 23. 37. And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, *Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three dayes, save thy self; If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross*, *Mat.* 27. 39, 40. Likewise the chief Priests with the Scribes and Elders, mocked among themselves, saying, *he saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe*, *Mark.* 15. 31, 32. One of the

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Thieves also railed on him saying, *If thou be the Christ save thy self and us, Luke* 23. 39. And when he cryed out to his God, *Eli, Eli,* &c. they derided him, *This man calleth for Elias, let us see whether Elias will come to save him, Mat.* 27. 47, 49. And after he was dead, the chief Priests and Pharisees spake of him, as of a known deceiver, *vers.* 63. And seem in a pious zeal for the Church, to take care that there be no further occasion after his death, for the reviving and spreading of his deceit and errors, *vers.* 64. Thus the holy one, the pure one, the just and true one, (in whose heart and mouth was no guile found) was numbred among transgressors, accounted a deceiver, and put to death as a blasphemer by the zealous priests and professors of that age, who were so confident of the righteousness of their cause (on the behalf of the Law of *Moses*, and their Sabbaths, Temple, &c.) against him, that when *Pilate* washed his hands as clear of his bloud, all the people answered and said, *his bloud be on us, and on our children, Mat.* 27. 25.

Now let men consider what the great exceptions are, which they have against the living appearance of Christ in his Spirit (now towards the close of the apostacy) and against us his witnesses, whom the Lord hath called forth to testifie to his name. Many exceptions men have against our *Persons*, our *Doctrine*, our *Practises*, for *want of miracles*, &c. Is this generation more wise, or just in their exceptions then the former was? Consider the main ones a little.

Their great exceptions against our *Doctrine* are.

1. *That we preach up a light within, and that he that receiveth that light receiveth a perfect gift; and growing up in it, groweth up to perfection, which in this life (through faith and obedience to this light or perfect gift) may be attained, and the body of sin put off, and the new man Christ put on.*

Answ. Indeed we cannot but preach up the light within, and declare unto men how great things it hath done for us, even that which we could never by any means meet with, from any light without. And this is perfect, and tends to make perfect, carrying on its work daily. Now he that feels its virtue, cannot doubt of its power. He that seeth the body of sin daily going off, cannot doubt but he may be stripped Indeed if a man strive against sin in his own will, (and by his own gathered knowledg)

he cannot get much ground, and so it is hard for him to believe perfection. But he that feels unity with that which is perfect, cannot but acknowledg that it is able to perfect him, and in faith and patience is encouraged to hope and wait for it.

2. *That we deny that Christ which dyed at Jerusalem, and his imputed righteousness, and set up an inherent righteousness.*

Answ. We know no other Christ then that which dyed at *Jerusalem*, only we confess our cheif knowledg of him is in Spirit. And as Christ said in the dayes of his flesh, that the way to know his Father, was to know him; and that he that knew him, knew the father also. So we now witness, that the way to know Christ is to know the Spirit; and that he that knoweth the Spirit, knoweth Christ also, with whom Christ is one, and from whom he cannot be seperated. And as for *imputed righteousness*, it is too pretious a thing to us for to be denyed by us. That which we deny is mens putting of it out of its place, applying it to them who are not in the true faith, and walk not in the true light: for in the true light (where the fellowship is with the Father and the Son) there alone the bloud cleanseth, 1 *John* 1.7. and there alone the righteousness is imputed to him, who is cleansed by the bloud in the light, and not to him who knows it not. And as for *inherent righteousness*, we meddle not with that word, but this we say; That our life exceedingly lies in feeling the righteousness of Christ wrought, and revealed in us; and we wish men could come out of the reasoning about it, into the feeling of the same thing with us: for then we are sure they would not so sharply, nor so long contend.

3. *That we deny the Ordinances and means of Salvation.*

Answ. We deny nothing that the Apostles or Christians formerly practised, nor do we deny any thing that any now practise in the light, and in the faith: but the setting up of such things in the will, that we deny; or the imitating these without the command of the Spirit, that we deny also. And this we testifie, that Antichrist crept in here, and that they are his great cover to keep men from the life, and therefore warn men to mind the life, and to take heed they be not kept from the substance by the shadows, where Antichrist lies lurcking to bewitch from the substance. And we are sure that these in Antichrists hands, are not the means of Salvation; but keep from the sight

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of the holy City, where the life and Salvation is. And we read that the *outward Court* was given to the *Gentiles*; who *trod under foot the holy City*, *Revel.* 11. 2. And we have found by experience, that while we our selves were crying up the outward Court, we did trample under foot the holy City, though we then knew it not.

Their exceptions against our *Persons* are, that we are *ignorant*, *illiterate*, and also *unsetled Persons* (who have still been seeking up and down, *&c.*)

Answ. What Persons are fittest for God to make use of, towards the recovery of his People out of the Apostacy? Doth not God chuse that which is weak, and mean, and contemptible, that his glory might the more appear? Is not this a more likely way for him to steal upon the World, then if he appeared in the wise and learned ones? And among whom is his appearing to be expected? among those who are setled upon their lees in the Apostacy; or among those who have mourned, panted, and sought to come out of it, and could not be setled without his appearing to them, and fixing of their feet upon the Rock. But have we been unsetled, since God hath fastned us on the living Foundation? Nay, here is no more going out, but he that abides faithful, remains a pillar in the house of God.

Men except likewise against our *practises*, as that we shew not *respect to persons*, and that we are not *strict* (after their manner) *in duties*, &c.

Answ. We have heard that voice, *Fear God, and give Glory to him*, *Revel.* 14. 7. (not only as it is written there, but in Spirit:) and where the Lord is exalted, the glory of the creature falls: read *Isa.* 2. how all falls in that day, that God alone might be exalted. And we cannot, in this mighty day of the Lord, any longer give to man that honour which he hath gathered in the fall, and which pleaseth the fallen nature, and not that which is borne of God. And for *duties*, we have bewailed (in the sight of the Lord) our former running into duties without his Spirit: and we must confess we can only pray in the Spirit, sing in the Spirit, wait in the Spirit, speak in the Spirit (as that gives utterance) and not of our selves, or when we will, but as we feel life (strength and power from on high) leading and assisting us. And our religion consists neither in willing nor running, but in waiting on the Spirit and power of the Lord, to

work all in us and for us. All these things we look upon to be our duty, and practise them.

It is likewise excepted against us, that we do not *work Miracles.*

Answ. We point to that which wrought all the outward Miracles formerly, and which now worketh great inward Miracles in spirit: and we are sure the same power (which we have received the Gospel in) is of the same healing virtue. But that power worketh according to the purpose of its own will, and not according to the will of man (yea though *Paul* had the gift of healing, yet he *left Trophimus at Miletum sick*, 2 Tim. 4. 20.) neither was the will or wisdome of man satisfied in all those Miracles which Christ and the Apostles wrought. It is enough for us to feel and live in the moving of the power, in which we rejoyce and are more satisfied (that by it our names are written in the Book of Life) then we could by any such outward and visible appearance and manifestation of it. But if we did work outward Miracles, yet if thou hadst not an inward eye to see them with, thou wouldst not be able to distinguish by what power they were wrought.

To what purpose should I mention any more particulars? Is it not enough? O fear before the Lord, and do not lose the present dispensation of life through mistake (or because ye cannot have things suited to your corrupt wills) but know the Gospel, which is an inward dispensation, and doth not consist in outward shadows, but in inward virtue, life and power: for *the Kingdome of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Spirit.* Come to wait for that, to feel that, to unite there; and then we shall not differ about that which is outward. But it is Antichrists way (by the Magistrates power) to force an agreement about the outward, which destroyes that tenderness of conscience which preservs the inward.

And now let me put one Question to you; Where is the deceit of the ages after Christ to be expected? Did the Jews deny *Moses* and the Prophets Writings, or Ordinances? nay were they not very zealous for these? and were not these their cover, under which they persecuted Christ, and vented all their malice against him? So can it be expected now, that the Deceivers of this age should deny the Apostles writings, or the practises therein mentioned? Or is it not rather to be expected, that under their crying up of these, they should hide their enmity against the life? Search and see, hath not every after-age of Professors took up the

words

words and practises of them who were persecuted in the foregoing age, and under the profession of those words and practises, have hid their spirit of persecution? There is a remnant only among Professors to be saved, the generality of them have still been persecuters, creeping into the form, getting that for a cover upon their backs, and then fighting against the life and power. O wait on the Lord in his fear, that ye may be found worthy to know the persecuted truth on the one hand, and the persecuting spirit on the other hand in this day of large profession, and also of bitter persecution!

Now what might be the cause, or how could it come to pass, that the zealous Worshippers of that age should thus err in their zeal, and be thus heady and rash against him, whom they looked for to be their Saviour? How came they thus to *err in vision, and stumble in judgment* in so weighty a matter? Shew unto us the cause, that we may see whether the same cause be not in us? for undoubtedly if it be, it will produce the same effect, and so we may ignorantly draw upon our heads the same heavy wrath in our day, that they did in their day.

Answ. The causes were very many, I may mention some few of the principal ones, which if they be seen into and removed, (by that power which is able to do it) such as are of a more inferiour influence, will not be able to stand.

1. One cause of their blind zeal, and bitterness against Christ, was, *Their ignorance of the Scriptures, and of the power of God.* If they had known the Scriptures in the true light, they could not but have known Christ, from whom the Scriptures were given forth; And if they had known the power of God, they could not but have known him who came in the power, yea who was the power. They had knowledge enough of both these one way, that is in the Letter; They knew the words of Scripture (they could make large expositions of them) they knew what was said in Scripture concerning the power of God, but they knew not the thing it self; and so turned against it, and made use of the words (which came from it, and testified of it) against it.

2. A second cause of this their sad miscarriage in their zeal, was, *Their putting the Law and Ordinances, and Writings of the Prophets out of their proper place.* They exceedingly magnified, and cryed them up, in that carnal way wherein they apprehended and practised them, but understood not the right end and use of them.

them. And by these means, practising the shadows in the carnal mind, they lost the substance, which the proper use of the shadows was to have pointed them unto.

3. *Their high conceits of the goodness of their state in relation to God, and of the certainty of their knowledge of the truths of God from* Moses *and the Prophets.* They were confident that they knew God aright, and that he was their father, and that they were his children and people. And so Christ appearing in a seeming contrariety to these (notwithstanding all his powerful preaching and miracles) they made no question but they might boldly conclude him, not to be of God.

4. *Christs coming in a way that they looked not for him.* They had concluded from the Scriptures, how Christ must appear, and he coming in a far different manner, they could not own him, but looked upon him as a Deceiver, one that pretended to be Christ, but was not like to what the Scripture said of Christ. So what the Scripture saith of Christs second coming, is hid as much from the carnal eye of professors in this age, as [illegible] said concerning his first coming, was hid from them in their age; and he will steal upon them as a Thief, at a time, and in a way, and after a manner that they expect not.

5. (Which is the main one, and the cause of all the former) *Because they were from the light within*, from the true light in their own hearts and consciences. The light within is the great Ordinance of God, and the proper means to give the knowledge of him, (2 *Cor.* 4.6.) without which it was never received under any dispensation: for the light that shines abroad (or from without) can alone be known and received by the light that shines within. Christ himself opens this in a Parable; *The light of the body* (saith he) *is the eye*; *if therefore thine eye be single*, (clear, without beams or moats) *thy whole body shall be full of light*, Mat. 6.22. But if that be evil, if that be dark, if that be closed by the God of the world, all *Moses* words, all the Prophets words, yea all Christs and his Apostles words, cannot give thee light. Can I see the light of the Sun, Moon, or Stars, (or of any fire or candle) if I have not a natural eye, and if that natural eye be not open? So neither can I see the light of any dispensation of life, if I have not an eye within me open, wherewith to see it. So that that which gives me the sight of the things of God, is the eye which God hath given me. By that may be read the eternal power and God-head

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in the creatures, in the Books of *Moses* and the Prophets, in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, as the spirit leads and opens. Yea the same spirit that opened to these without Books, may again open to any of us without Books at his pleasure, (and will not be limited to Books) and we then may read also as they did, even within in the spirit, and in the immediate life; but without this, can none of the things of God be read aright. Now the God of this world had blinded this eye in the Jews, yea they themselves had *stopped their ears, and closed their eyes*, &c. they would not see this way, they would not be converted and healed this way. They would keep up the knowledge, which they had gathered from *Moses* and the Prophets without this eye; and with that they would see, or not at all.

Thus being from the light within, they could not see the place of life within, where life is to be received: they could not see the wombe of wisdom, which is within, and so could not enter into it, and be born again. And being not born of the wisdome, how could they justifie the wisdome? being not born of the light, how could they know or own Christ, whose coming and appearance was in the light? For that appearance of Christ the life, in that body of flesh, could not be discerned by all mens wisdome in the letter, (the Disciples themselves came not so to know it) but *my Father which is in Heaven hath revealed it to you.* And mark it, the Disciples, who were illiterate and not so knowing of the Scriptures that were written of Christ, yet they knew Christ: and the Scribes and Pharisees, which were very skilful in the letter, could not know him. What was the reason? The reason lay in the difference of the eye, or light wherewith they looked: the one looked with an outward eye, the other with an inward eye. And a little inward light wil do that, which a great deal of outward light will not do. And this I can certainly affirm, that all the light that men can gather from the Scriptures, cannot give them the knowledge of Christ as he hath appeared in this age, nay nor as he hath appeared in any age since the daies of the Apostles: but a little true inward light will give the knowledge of this thing, and open those Scriptures infallibly (in its season) which all the Generations of wise and learned men have been controverting and disputing about, in that wisdome and searching spirit which is never to understand them. This then is the main and full reason of this deep error of

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the Jews, and their desperate splitting upon the rock, which would have saved them, *They were begotten of the Letter which was given forth in former ages, but not of the life which was raised up in their age*: and so they knew not how to turn to the light within, which alone was able to give them the true and certain knowledge of the things of God.

Now consider these things well, O ye Professors of this age, and take heed that ye do not fall after the same example of unbeleif. *Be not high minded, but fear.* Be not so confident of what you have gathered by your wisdom for truth from the Scriptures, (after the manner that they were, of what they had gathered by their wisdome) but fear lest ye should be mistaken, as they were: and wait for the opening of that eye in you, which was shut in them, even the true eye, in the true Light, by the holy anointing, where there never was, nor can be any mistake. The Jews fell *by unbeleif*, unbeleif of what? They beleeved the Scriptures, they beleeved according to that knowledg they had gathered from the Scriptures: but they did not beleeve in the living word. They had a knowledge abiding in them, which they had gathered from the Scriptures, but they had not the living word abiding in them; and so their faith was but unbeleif: (for the living faith, stands in beleif of the living word in the heart, which the Scriptures direct to; without the knowledge of which, all knowledge of words is vain; and without faith in which, all faith is vain also) Now saith the Apostle to the Gentile-Christians, *Thou standest by faith*, Rom. 11.20. by what Faith? By Faith in that word in the heart, which they neglected and turned from, *Rom.* 10. 8. for *Moses* had taught them, after the Laws and Ordinances, about worship and sacrifices, that the word that they were to obey and do (the word that could give them life, and make them obedient to all the commandements without) was in their heart and mouth, *Deut.* 30.14. and so the Prophet *Micah*, when they proposed sacrifices, and Oil, to please God with, he brings them to this which was given to them in common with mankind, *Mich.* 6. 8. for all Ordinances and Laws, and observations, and practises without, are but to bring to the life within, which is to be found again there, where it was lost, and still lies slain and hid (even in the feild, or house where it was lost.) And he that seeks abroad, never finds it; but when the candle is lighted in his own house, and he searches narrowly in the feild in his own heart,

heart, and the eternal eye begins to open in him, then he cries out, God was in this place, and I was not aware of it. Ah how the enemy bewiched me, to run from mountain to mountain, and from hill to hill, and hath hereby covered my eye from beholding the mountain of the Lords house, and from feeling the spring of my life, which I further and further ran from, all the while I was seeking abroad. Therefore O ye Professors, be not so conceited like the Jews, and running after them into their desolation and misery, but learn wisdome by their fall! Do not you set up your Ordinances and Scriptures, after the manner that they set up theirs: for this is your Dauger: for this I clearly, in the Light of the Lord, testifie to you: that if ye gather a knowledge and wisdom from the letter of the Scriptures, after the manner that they did, without knowledge of the word within, and without a light within from that word, ye lose the living faith, ye are but dead branches, and all your knowledge of Scriptures, and practises, and Faith, and Duties, &c. that ye here hold and observe, are but for the fire; and the flames of eternal wrath, shall kindle more fiercely upon you because of them, then upon the Jews: for ye stumble at the same stumbling stone, at which they stumbled and fell, and it will fall upon you also. And as you have more Scriptures, then they had, and the experience of their fall to warn you: so your destruction will be exceeding dreadful if ye neglect so great salvation, where of at this day there are so many living & powerful witnesses, as they are known and owned to be in the light of the Lord, though despised in your exalted and conceited wisdom.

Now to help any honest and single hearts among you, over this great stumbling block of a light within, consider these few things.

1. That all the knowledge (all the true knowledge) that ever ye had of God was from a light within. I do not deny that ye might receive your knowledge through the Scriptures (and some warmth formerly in those things which ye call Ordinances, and duties) but that whereby ye received the knowledge, was the light within, the eye that God secretly opened in your spirits. This was the way ye then came by it, though ye perhaps might feel the thing, but not know how ye came by it: even as a Babe may see truly, but doth not understand its own eye, or knows how it sees.

2. While this eye was kept open in you, your knowledge was true in its measure, and serviceable to you, and did draw you neerer to God, making ye truly tender, meek, sweet, humble, patient, loving, gentle, and full of pretious breathings towards God, and after righteousness. O how lovely were you to God in this state! *when Israel was a child, I loved him.* God remembreth at this day the kindness of your youth, and is seeking after you, O why do ye so harden your hearts against him!

3. That wherever this eye is shut, the vertue of the true knowledg is lost, and the sweet fruits thereof wither. The outward part of the knowledg may be retained, yea, perhaps much increased, but the life is gone, and the pure sweet Savourineſs (to God) vanished. And if this eye were but a little opened again in you, your death and unsavourineſs might be soon seen and felt by you in all your knowledge, duties, ordinances, yea in your very graces and experiences. You have a faith still, yea, but it wants the savour of your former faith: ye have some kind of love, gentleness, and meekness; yea, but it is but a thing formed by the fleshly wisdome *and reasoning*, but not natural from the living spring, not such as ye once felt, &c. for the true and living eye being shut, that which is then best (or afterwards attained) is held but in the dead part, and serves but to feed death.

4. The great work and design of the enemy of your Souls, is not to steal away the bulk of your knowledg, or to draw you from ordinances, or duties, but to steal the life out of your Spirits. This I have experimented from my child-hood, I might still have knowledg enough of any kind, but that which I wanted was life, and I was still sick under all the sorts of knowledge that ever I met with, and under all ordinances and duties, for want of life. The Lord had given my soul a taste of true life, whereby I became unsatisfied without it, and no manner of knowledge or enjoyment could take me up by the way: yea, when through extremity, I seemed willing to be content with any thing, yet still my heart was sick after that one thing, which alone could truly ease and satisfie it. Now if the enemy can but prevail herein, to blind the inward eye, and steal away the life within, he hath enough. Then abound, as much as thou wilt, in knowledg, in zeal, in duties, in ordinances, in reading Scriptures, praying,

ing, meditating, &c. thou art the surer his hereby, and so much the better servant to him: for how much the richer thou art in knowledge, experiences, hopes and assurance (without the life and power) so much the more acceptable, and honourable, and useful art thou in his kingdome.

Therefore see where ye are; Is the inward eye open in you? do ye know the light within? (surely he that sees by a light within, can hardly speak evil of it!) or hath the enemy, by some of his artifices, drawn a vail over that eye, wherewith ye once saw in some measure? O be not slight in a matter of so great weight! O please not your selves with the eye of the perishing wisdome, with deaths eye, and with deaths knowledge of Scriptures, and of the Son of God, which speaks great words of the fame of true wisdome, but is a stranger and enemy to the thing! O, life is pretious, eternal life is pretious. To have the word of God abiding in the heart, and to feel the true light giving the true life, who can set a value on this! Ah do not loose your Souls for a trifle, for a little such knowledge of Scriptures as the earthly part can gather! (This I cannot but exceedingly despise, although the Scriptures I truly honour, for their testimony of that whereby I live) if ye see not the way of life by the inward light (which alone can shew it) ye loose your Souls. If the God of the World hath blinded that eye in you, what are all your treasures of wisdome and knowledg? What are all your hopes? and what will become of you? All these sparks of your own kindling from Scripture, will not secure you from the bed of sorrow. O several sorts of professors why will ye dye with the uncircumcised? why will ye go down into the pit, among them that know not the Lord?

But what shall I say to this generation? The spiritually-wise foreseeth the storm, and hideth himself; but the spiritually-foolish run on headily, and are punished. The cloudes have long been gathering, but the sick eye cannot discern the signs and seasons of the times, and so because judgment comes not as men expected, they grow hard, and wear off the the sense, wherewith they were somewhat affected at the first threatning of it. But assuredly both judgment and mercy hasten, and they will come, and will not tarry.

For the same Lord God Almighty, which confounded the

heathens Babel (when their sins and vain confidence was ripe) which they built to prevent any future flood. For though they once had the true knowledg of God from an inward light, *Rom.* 1. 21. yet they soon left that, *not liking to retain God in their knowledge*, vers. 28. but running out into *imaginations*, and so building a *Babel*, whereby their fooliſh hearts became darkned to the light, which God had made to ſhine in them, which ſhewed what might be known of God unto them, *verſ.* 19.

Yea the Lord God which overthrew the Jews Babel, which they had built from their knowledg of the Laws and ordinances of *Moſes*, and the Scriptures written to them (they running out into imaginations alſo) whereby they likewiſe thought to prevent *the overflowing ſcourge* from coming near them, *Iſa.* 28. 15.

The ſame God will overthrow the Chriſtians *Babel*, which they have built from the Prophets and Apoſtles words, (by their own imaginations, and conceivings, in the high mindedneſs, out of the fear) whereby they think to eſcape the deluge of eternal wrath: (for their City alſo ſhall be *thrown down with violence, and ſhall be found no more at all*, *Revel.* 18. 21.) And the great work of this day is to diſcover the rottenneſs of their wall, and the untemperedneſs of the morter wherewith they have dawbed it. He that readeth let him underſtand: but the uncircumciſed in heart and ears, cannot.

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